

The use of silicone products in the treatment of hypertrophic and keloid scars

Occupational Therapy & Physiotherapy

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

Introduction

This leaflet is for patients who have developed raised scars and who may benefit from the use of silicone gel.

What is a hypertrophic scar?

A hypertrophic scar is a raised scar that stays within the boundaries of the original wound. It can partially resolve without any intervention.



What is a keloid scar?

A keloid scar is an over growth of dense fibrous tissue that spreads beyond the boundaries of the original wound or injury.



It can occur after a simple scratch, acne, piercing, surgical or non-surgical wounds or burns.

They are more likely to occur in people with highly pigmented skin. Certain areas of the body are more likely to develop keloid scars, for example, chest and shoulder. Scars will not get smaller in area but can be flattened and softened. Keloid scars are likely to reoccur if surgically removed.

What are silicone dressings?

Silicone is a transparent and flexible material that is resistant to all micro-organisms. There are a variety of silicone products on the market.

When are they used?

Silicone products are used in both the prevention and treatment of hypertrophic and keloid scars. Individuals who are prone to developing keloid scars are advised to use silicone dressings immediately after any open wound has healed, to prevent scars developing.

How do they work?

No one knows exactly how they work, but most scientists agree that it has something to do with their ability to keep the scars at the right moisture level. There is considerable clinical evidence to support the effectiveness of gel sheeting in the prevention and reduction of raised scars.

How are they applied?

A dressing should be selected that overlaps the area to be treated by at least one centimetre. Larger dressings may be cut to size or shape before removal of the protective film.

Wash and thoroughly dry the skin before applying gel. Most gels have a slightly sticky surface to keep them in place, but sometimes additional methods are required to prevent the gel detaching, for example, Mefix tape. Sometimes the gel is worn under a pressure garment or splint, which will hold the gel in place.

How long should I wear the dressing?

Ultimately, all products should be used 24 hours a day to achieve best results (some need to be removed for washing). With all products a gradual increase in wearing time is initially suggested. For example, wear for two hours on day one, four hours on day two, eight hours or overnight on day three.

When should I stop using the dressing?

Scars can change over a period of months or even years. Most research has been carried out over a 3-6 month period, but many patients continue using the gel for 2-3 years. If you feel the gel is helping, then keep using it. Once you feel the scar has softened / flattened to an acceptable level, gradually reduce the use of the gel. If the scar thickens again, then re-application of the gel is indicated.

Are there any side effects?

No major side effects have been reported. Occasionally patients can experience itching or redness. If this happens, remove the gel and gradually re-apply once the symptoms have settled.

Which products are available?

There are several products on the market. Here is a selection, but other makes are available.

Cica Care® (Smith & Nephew), **Silgel®** (Nagor) & **Topigel®** (Biodermis) are gel sheets of various thickness / strength. They can be washed in warm soapy water, rinsed, dried and re-used daily. One sheet may last several months. When not in use the sheet should be stored in the protective plastic cover or in a clean plastic bag. Do not fold the sheet. Store at room temperature.

Mepiform® (Mölnlycke Health Care) is a thin flexible dressing, like a sticky plaster. It is waterproof and can be worn while bathing and showering.

A new dressing should be applied every 3-7 days or when the adherent properties of the dressing are no longer sufficient.

Dermatix® & **Silgel®** are gel in ointment form, supplied in a tube. The gel can be smoothed over a scar like a cream to form a thin film. Gel ointments are useful as an occasional alternative to dressings or where the application of a dressing is difficult.

There is less evidence to support the use of ointments. It can be difficult to assess how often to renew application of the ointment.

Where can I obtain silicone products?

Silicone products cannot be bought from high street chemists but you can source products online.

It may be possible for you to get some products on prescription. Please check with your GP Surgery.

Where can I get further advice?

Ask your therapist, GP or plastic surgeon for further advice.

Changing Faces is a charity providing help and advice to adults and children with a visible disfigurement.

www.changingfaces.org.uk

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowałiby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。